



The Athenian Mercury:

Tuesday, January 31. 1693.

Quest. 1. **I**N one of your Mercuries, in Answer to that Question, — Where a Woman may be found that comes up to the Character given by Solomon of a Virtuous Woman? — You seem to doubt whether such a one can be met with: On this I desire to know, if you do not think our Sovereign Lady, the QUEEN, as exact a Copy of that fair Picture as can be drawn, and that in the Instances you there give; for certainly the Heart of her Royal Husband does safely trust in her, when he can year after year expose his Sacred Life abroad, and securely leave his Three Kingdoms to her Conduct? Has she not hitherto done him good all her days? And tho' we cannot call the Queen a Spinster, yet does she not rise early, and work with her hands? And we all know she speaks with Wisdom, and in her Tongue is the Law of Kindness — So that I think, without Flattery, we may subjoin what Solomon there says, Many Daughters have done vertuously, but Thou excellest them all.

Ans. Future Ages will say more than we must on this Subject, because 'tis as dangerous to praise Good Princes, as to complain of Bad ones; tho' might we speak out, we are confident there's none but believe the Character the Querist here gives, agrees exactly to the Person to whom 'tis apply'd, except her Self, and the Jacobites: One thing only we must except against, and that is, the Querist thinks it improper to call the Queen a Spinster, but with all the Respect imaginable, we think her Majesty the greatest Spinster in England: We are sure she sets more hands at Work than any other, in the Royal Linnen Manufacture, which has the happiness to be under her particular Protection and Favour.

Quest. 2. You oftentimes say in Answer to some of your Queries, that they were sent by Ladies, and accordingly address your selves to that Sex in your Reply. Now we'd fain know how you come to have the Art of discerning, and to distinguish a Male Query from a Female; wherein too we doubt you are oftentimes mistaken, for it looks not at all likely that Women shou'd either write so good Sense, or Spell so well as we see done in some Queries, which you attribute to that Sex?

Ans. Tho' the present Query comes from a Club, as 'tis express'd in the Letter, all of which 'twas too tedious to insert, yet we see they are all of 'em so unhappy as to keep bad Company, none but their own dear selves, and Women just like 'em; for it seems they are acquainted with none of that Sex that have any more than five (at most six) Sences, nor it seems can any of their poor Mistresses so much as Write or Read, unless such Scrambles as usually come from Women of no good Quality. We must e'ne pity 'em, and let 'em alone in their mistake a little longer, till we have answer'd their deep doubt — How we know a Male Query from a Female? We confess we can have no such demonstration in the present Case, as the Cardinals are reported to have of the New Pope, when they cry, — *Mas nobis est Dominus*; but however we can make shift to guess by the Hand, the Stile, and the Querists own Subscription and Affirmation, which we are sure never fails unless some Roguy Male Querist paulms upon us in the other Sexes name; by which marks we durst venture a small Wager we are as seldom deceiv'd, as any of the Querists themselves, who if they saw a thing in Petticoats brush along by 'em, even tho' t'had a Mask on, wou'd go near to swear 'twas a Woman. But now to confute their foolish Fancy, that none of that Sex can write good Sense, or Spell well, We let 'em know, that the last Query, and that following, came both from a Woman, in which we han't alter'd three Words — This we have as much certainty of, as the Nature of the

thing is capable of giving — 'Tis a perfect *Womans Hand*, and does not appear feign'd: We have receiv'd many Letters before from the same Person, in the same Hand, and the same Stile and Sence, particularly that of Patches, and the Subscription is always as from a Woman; nay, and that a stout *Williamite* too, as is plain by the last, [and several other Questions] — Whence it appears that 'tis a most notorious and malicious Scandal on their Sex, that they're all *Jacobites*; since whatever becomes of the *Cocquets*, and *Scrawlers*, those that can write and read, and think, are fast Friends to King *William*.

Quest. 3. There is a Gentleman whose Friends are very desirous to see him settled before their Death: He has now the Offer of Four Wives, the one a very considerable Fortune, but nothing else that is praise-worthy to recommend her, and this Lady he despises, but this his Friends are most for: Another a very beautiful Lady, young, gay and brisk, and tho' she is not over wise, yet her Person is very taking, and he cou'd love her extremely. The third is a Lady of great Goodness, high Generosity, and has a World of Wit; this he esteems above 'em all, but knows not where to fix: for there's a fourth that Courts him with all the Insinuation and Passion imaginable, but she's the veriest Coquette in the Town, yet abating that, is every way a desirable Match. In these Circumstances, your Advice as disinterested and impartial Persons is earnestly desired, and pray give what you'd follow your selves in the same Condition: The Gentleman desires it, needs it, and is very worthy of it; therefore resolve him how he shall dispose of his Heart and Person: Whether his Interest shou'd sway him, and he comply with his Relations, in chusing the Rich Heiress, and so advance himself in the World, tho' he can never Love one so unlively both in Body and Mind: Or whether his Fancy shou'd lead him, and he shou'd marry that pretty Lady, whose Person he is so infinitely taken with, but is sensible she will never make a suitable Companion: Or whether his Judgment shou'd prevail, and he shou'd prefer her who has not the Fortune of the first, nor the Beauty of the second, tho' very agreeable, and far from unhandsome, and who he is assur'd will make him not only a good Wife, but a faithful Friend? Or whether he shou'd be so generously grateful as to take her that Loves him, tho' he's sensible her daily Impertinencies will distract him. — You have somewhere said Love-Questions are in Post-haste, and this being one of that nature, pray let it have a speedy Resolution!

Ans. Poor Gentleman! he's like to be stifled with Kisses, and in sore danger of being press'd to Death with Roses! — How many an honest man now wou'd be glad of the worst bit of his leavings? But to business. If the propagation of *Guineas* were the only end of Marriage, the first wou'd do best. — If neither Men nor Women had Souls, as a parcel of Turks and Jews think of the latter, and a few Fools of the former, the second wou'd be most desirable. — If a man were oblig'd to cut his own Throat, or what's worse, turn *Gally-slave*, and tug at the matrimonial Oar — till Death shem do part, purely and only to save a *Womans* longing, then let him take the last that's in Love with him. — But if he's for a Match thro' and thro', of Body and Soul together, let him e'ne — To have-and-to-hold-it with the Third, who, if they have but enough between 'em to live above Contempt or Care, can want no Fortune, while she has so large a share of Wit, Goodness, and Generosity. This, we assure him is the course we'd take our selves, and the choice we'd make: — If we han't don't already: For generally those that are once noos'd (at least for a while) think they've the best in the *World*, and every honest Husband is bound to believe.

Qu. 3.

Quest. 4. *A young Man a Friend of mine is much cast down and discontented by reason of a Difference lately happening between him and his Father, the Occasion whereof is this, viz. The young Man's Father is a Gentleman that hath been Exercised for many Years past with great and various Troubles, and thereby reduced to such Extremity that forced him to leave his Native Countrey, and make this City his residence almost these Eight Years, the greatest part of which time he lodged at a Widdow's House, (a truly virtuous and good Woman) who being made sensible of his Circumstances, commiserated his Condition, (which was very low) and as I am fully assured, she did to the utmost, even beyond her Power, contribute Relief to him in his greatest Exigencies; and in short, she performed all the good Offices to him that it was possible for an honest Christian Woman to do; which he often acknowledged with great Thankfulness, promising to make her full satisfaction when it pleased God to enable him, and that he would never leave her until he had fulfilled such his Promise, with many other oft repeated Speeches (to the like Effect) wherewith she was very well satisfied, it being only the Confidence she had in his fair Promises, and her own Charitable Compassion that mov'd her to do what she did for him, (he being then Incapable to make her any other satisfaction whatsoever:) But now it is so fallen out of late, that the Gentleman hath had a Prospect of repairing his Decay'd Fortunes, which he no sooner perceives (but pufft up with his future Expectations) leaves her House, (without the least Cause given) and takes other Lodgings, having neither satisfied the Woman for his Lodging, Dyer, &c. nor so much as reckoned with her for the same before he went away; and he now not only declines coming to Account with her, but hath the Confidence to say he Owes her nothing, &c. His Son who had been Partaker with him in his Exile and Troubles, and lodged with him at the Widdow's House, knowing all the Circumstances above related to be true, (as being a daily Eye-Witness thereof) was very much troubled at his Father's Management, and in humble manner acquaints his Father with his Sentiments thereof, who was so far from adhering to any thing he offer'd, that he first beats, and then turns his said Son (being his Eldest, about 21 Years old) out of doors, very late in the Night, without One Penny in his Pocket, and bids him see his Face no more, (tho' he was never able justly to tax his said Son with the least Extravagancy whatsoever) but only for taking the poor Womans part, to whom the young Man knew himself (as well as his Father) was so very much Obligated. The Premises considered, I humbly desire your Opinion,*

What Course this poor Woman must take to recover her just right of the Father, she having no Bond or other Security from him, (relying on his fair Promises and supposed Integrity to her) she having been a Widdow about ten Years, and hath had two Children to maintain ever since (he having likewise so exhausted that little she had) that she is in no wise able to go to Law with him; which if she was able, she doubts would not avail, because she hath no positive Evidence that can Testifie upon what Condition he was at her House, (except his own Son;) besides he is One that belongs to the Law, therefore she thinks he is the worse to deal with?

Whether the Young Man (his Son) lye under a Breach of the Fifth Commandment, in absenting himself from his Father on this Account, (having never justly offended him?) and whether he is Obligated to take part with his Father against the poor Woman, (tho' it be against his Reason and Conscience) or to stand by the Woman, and endeavour to make her all the Amends he can for the many great Benefits he is so well satisfied his Father and he have received from her, notwithstanding his Father's express Command to the contrary? Your speedy Resolves in this Case are earnestly desired, it being certain Matter of Fact just now in Agitation.

Ans. 1. As to the first Question, we know of no Remedy but the Chancery, which perhaps may see her satisfied for Board and Lodging, upon his not producing her Acquittances for 'em, but even in this Case she had best be satisfied by good Council at Law before she acts any thing in it.

2. To the second, We don't know what you mean by that suggestion of undutifulness in absenting from your Father upon his Commands so to do, tho' We think you ought not to absent your self, if you can by any just means, (as the Interest of Friends, or your own Silence in the Affair,) procure his Favour again; but to join with him to Oppress the Widdow, is an Impiety of that blackness, as we hope needs no opposite Arguments to deter you from it; but rather (if you can't do it Publickly and with your Father's) to make private Restitution, since the double Obligation of Justice and Charity oblige you to it.

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